

Judges 20:1-25 - Thursday, March 14th, 2013

Judges 20 - (1) So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the LORD at Mizpah. (2) And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword.

- Here in the first two verses we're told something very interesting concerning the response on the part of Israel to what the Levite sent them.
- What's interesting about it is that the outcry is so great, that it rises to the level of their assembling a four-hundred-thousand-man army.
- I point this out because of the absence of such an outcry in our nation today when acts even more evil than this are committed every day.

- Sadly, whenever something unspeakably evil happens today, it's made into a Lifetime Movie, or a 48 Hours Unsolved Mystery, instead.
- Be that as it may, I must say that I was both blessed and impressed by some emails I received last week concerning chapter 19's teaching.
- So much so, I may stand corrected as it relates to the Levite being able to sleep all night knowing what was happening to his concubine.

Dear Pastor Farag, Shalom in His Blessing, Your comment about not understanding how the Levite can be so callused, as to allow his concubine to be molested to death. May I offer, perhaps, some food for thought? Earlier on, the Levite refused to 'turn in' to a village, 'not' Israeli, in the presumption of safety being unavailable. Perhaps, based on tradition, and clues of verbiage, the Levite did not know his concubine (property of slightly higher stature than slave) had been offered to the evil hearted town-people, because, he, feeling 'perfectly safe,' due to tradition of guests being sacrosanct, (sacred), beneath the roof of the host, was asleep?? It is the host that offers the daughter, and the Levite's concubine, evidently, after dinner and wine. Feelings of 'security' allow a person to sleep soundly. (It is the host's obligation to keep all 'secure, and safe.')

The Levite, not knowing what had transpired, would account for him thinking the girl was asleep. Consider, her hands were on the threshold, and she was facing the door, which would mean, if I understand safety of that day, she died trying to acquire safety, and the touching of the threshold indicated that the host was not party to her death. Please note, also, only the concubine was taken ... the host's daughter apparently was not. The villains would know that the host lived there, and would not go away, thus would be in a position to press charges against them, where a wayfarer would lick his mental wounds, journey on, but would not know who accomplished the dastardly deed. Ancient hospitality codes, which were sacrosanct, beyond the lives of property (women, material, and animal), even unto the man of the house's life, before a guest (male) could be molested, especially the type of 'knowing,' they intended (Abomination that causes desolation (of character)). I learn much, from your teachings, and pray you are not insulted by my suggested understanding. Judges, especially Judges 19, took me a long time, before I was led to some semblance of understanding of what God is saying. Even, and especially, Israeli town-folk, who generate an abomination, that justifies the butchering of the victim, so a part can be sent to all, who would need rectify a problem that can eat into the entire State/Nation, cannot be debated. Only action can answer the demand/curse, since the 'blood of the individual, victim, will be counted against all who subscribe to the (in this case) 'Law of Hospitality.' Keep Teaching, Keep the Watch, I'll see you at the Snatching. Arley Steinhour

(3) (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the children of Israel said, "Tell *us*, how did this wicked deed happen?" (4) So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, "My concubine and I went into Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night. (5) And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me, but instead they ravished my concubine so that she died. (6) So I took hold of my concubine, cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of Israel, because they committed lewdness and outrage in Israel.

- If you're thinking to yourself that this is not how it happened, that's because this is not how it happened. He's embellishing the story a bit.
- Actually, embellishing is an understatement, he's not only distorting of the facts, he's downright lying about what actually happened to him.
- The reason I bring this up is because it will be germane to our understanding of what he's trying to accomplish in the verses that follow.

(7) Look! All of you *are* children of Israel; give your advice and counsel here and now!" (8) So all the people arose as one man, saying, "None *of us* will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house; (9) but now this *is* the thing which we will do to Gibeah: *We will go up* against it by lot. (10) We will take ten men out of *every* hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of *every* thousand, and a thousand out of *every* ten thousand, to make provisions for the people, that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel." (11) So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man.

- Couple of thoughts here, the first of which is the conspicuous absence of anyone seeking the Lord about what He would have them to do.
- I find it interesting that this Levite, and the children of Israel with him, would just arbitrarily come up with this strategy to mete out revenge.
- However, in all fairness to them it could be argued that they are simply doing that which they were commanded to do back in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 13:12-18 NKJV (12) "If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying, (13) 'Corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods" '—which you have not known— (14) then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And *if it is* indeed true *and* certain *that* such an abomination was committed among you, (15) you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock—with the edge of the sword. (16) And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again. (17) So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy, have compassion on you and multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers, (18) because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do *what is* right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

(12) Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What *is* this wickedness that has occurred among you?"
- To their credit, at least they're giving the Benjamites an opportunity to explain their side of the story. The problem is that it goes nowhere.
- The reason I say that is because there's no response in the text on the part of the Benjamites, which tells me they know they have sinned.
- This shouldn't come as any surprise given that this is sort of textbook in the sense that those who are wrong will rarely ever admit they are.

(13) Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men who *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!" But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel. (14) Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel. (15) And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men. (16) Among all this people *were* seven hundred select men *who were* left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's *breadth* and not miss.

- To have left handed Benjamites, who were this skilled no less, is the quintessential oxymoron of sorts in terms of what their name means.
- Let me explain, Benjamin in Hebrew, and even my native tongue of Arabic means "son of my right hand," or right hand man if you prefer.
- The only reason I mention this is because it reminds me of why there's a left handed Judge back in chapter three by the name of Ehud.

Judges 3:15-16 (15) But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (16) Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh.

- Woven into the fabric of these two verses we have the answer as to why it is that details about left handed Benjamites are in the scriptures.
- Here with Eglon, because he's left-handed, he's able to sneak in a double-edged sword on his right thigh into the presence of Moab's king.
- This because, they would only check the left-thigh for weapons before seeing the king, especially when it came to right-handed Benjamites.

(17) Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these *were* men of war.
- This is just wrong on every level, in that the Benjamites are taking sides with the inhabitants of Gibeah, and in so doing, side against God.
- Not only are they posturing themselves against God, they are also posturing themselves right smack in the middle of the ways of God too.
- By that I mean, they are aligning themselves with the evil inhabitants of Gibeah, and as such, they're meddling on the wrong side of this.

Proverbs 26:17 NKJV He who passes by *and* meddles in a quarrel not his own *is like* one who takes a dog by the ears.

(18) Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God to inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?" The LORD said, "Judah first!" (19) So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped against Gibeah. (20) And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah. (21) Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites. (22) And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day. (23) Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, "Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?" And the LORD said, "Go up against him." (24) So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day. (25) And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of the children of Israel; all these drew the sword.

- If you're one having great difficulty with this defeat of those presumably on the right side of this military operation, you're in good company.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that it adds insult to injury when you realize that in seeking the Lord, they're told to send Judah in first.
- This begs the question of why it is God would knowingly allow them to suffer the loss of 22,000 men all of whom are doing the right thing.

- While there are no easy answers for this, there are at least some thoughts concerning this amongst Bible commentators on this passage.
- One thought is that this is yet another one of those places in God's Word, where He, in His sovereignty, has chosen not to reveal it to us.
- Another thought is that this is yet another one of those places in God's Word, where we can be in God's will and still suffer a great loss.

- If you don't mind I'll share with you a few more, another of which is that God may be chastising all of Israel because of all their sinfulness.
- Another commentator suggests that even though it was a just and righteous cause, it speaks to counting the cost of doing the right thing.
- Perhaps we need look no further as to why it is that Christian's will never confront sin, they know doing the right thing comes at great cost.